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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP AT PRINCETON

The articles of specifically theological significance in the recent centennial volume of biblical and theological studies¹ serve to set forth clearly the position which the Princeton scholars today feel themselves called to defend and expound. They believe that Christianity stands or falls with the affirmation or the denial of a genuine intrusion into the "natural" world of a definite divine revelation and a divinely appointed means of salvation solely through the atonement of the divine Christ. As President Patton puts it in his article on "Theological Encyclopaedia": "In the defense of supernatural Christianity everything is at stake. And this is the reason that in the crisis of today we are witnessing the greatest war of the intellect that has ever been waged since the birthday of the Nazarene" (p. 33). Says Professor Caspar Wistar Hodge in his article on "The Finality of Christianity":

The three ideas which seem to be implied in the term "finality" when applied to Christianity, are, abstractly put, first, that the Christian religion as the product of a special supernatural revelation is independent of and underivable from other religions; secondly, that it is unsurpassable, i.e., that no more perfect religion will be attained by any conceivable evolution of religion; and thirdly, that it is exclusive. This last idea does not mean that other religions contain no truth, but that since Christ is the only Saviour, Christianity is the only religion in which we can truly find communion with God [p. 453].

It is this sense of a mighty conflict, in which the Princeton theologians stand as the protagonists of supernaturalism against an aggressive naturalism, which gives to their articles a dignity and a scholarly impressiveness which cannot be easily ignored. There are, it is true, plenty of men today who are defending supernaturalism; but in too many instances there is more zeal than knowledge displayed. The men of the Princeton faculty are advocates of orthodoxy whose scholarship commands entire respect. They know what is being said on the other side. They do not for a moment suppose that misrepresentation of an opponent

¹ *Biblical and Theological Studies*. By the Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. Published in commemoration of the one hundredth founding of the seminary. New York: Scribner, 1912. 634 pages.

is a worthy or effective way of making good their own position. In this regard they set an example which theologians on both sides of the controversy would do well to follow. Their utterances thus represent the best case which can be made out for orthodoxy, and stand as typical of the best conservative scholarship of the country at the opening of the twentieth century. One or two characteristics of this scholarship, as it appears in the volume before us, may be noted.

One who has felt the force of the historical method of scholarship, and who because of this is keenly aware of the intimate relations between Christian doctrine and the historical development of humanity, is struck with the absence of this trait in the discussions of the Princeton theologians. Christianity is to them a system of revealed truth. In its essence it is non-human, and its history is not so much the story of the development of human aspirations under the stress of historical circumstances, as it is a record of movements of conformity and of non-conformity. The theologian is to learn from history how he may successfully confute the nonconformists and how he may triumphantly establish the authorized system of truth. Take, for example, these sentences from Dr. Patton's article:

The age of Supernaturalism was followed by that of Rationalism, in which the attempt was made to reduce the doctrines of Christianity to the level of human reason and to reject those which resisted the attempt. Following this period of Rationalism or, rather, when Rationalism and Supernaturalism were the contending foes, when it was a duel between infallible Bible and infallible reason, came Schleiermacher, a sort of Platonic Methodist, to protest against the deification of the intellect and plead for the place of the feelings in religion. . . . Sooner or later Ritschlianism must give up its see-saw of Intellect and Feeling between Socinianism and Evangelical Christianity and settle down to one or the other [p. 28].

While this is correctly enough stated, yet it puts the systems of thought ("isms") foremost as if they were actual entities existing almost independently of the social and psychological ferment of the period under description. There is the recognition of the fact that thinking did take this form or that; but just *why* men should wish to put forth anti-evangelical ideas is left in the dark. Indeed, one feels that in the analysis of naturalism there is almost no real insight into the vital reasons for the existence of this method of thinking.

This lack of social and historical atmosphere means that issues are dealt with on strictly logical and argumentative lines. The Princeton theologian feels that the proper way to meet the great issue is to engage

in a thoroughgoing critical analysis, so as to show by logic that the naturalistic position is inherently irreconcilable with the retention of essential Christianity, and that it ultimately leads to spiritual confusion. For example, Professor William Benton Greene, Jr., in his article entitled "The Supernatural," first declares that there can be no such thing as dogmatics unless the reality of the supernatural be affirmed, and that "by its own claim the Christian religion must stand or fall with the reality of the Supernatural." Then he proceeds, by careful critical definition, to indicate the intellectual tenability of a belief in the supernatural, and to show that arguments against his position are vulnerable in some particular. It is an admirable piece of work, but it dwells so exclusively in the realm of ideas-as-such that it runs the risk of discussing the problem *in vacuo*. In order correctly to appraise the present reluctance to affirm a thoroughgoing supernaturalism, the historical development of human thoughts and practices under the influence of the forces of our modern world must be understood. After reading Professor Greene's arguments, one feels that he has made out an excellent case, so far as traditional, logical, and metaphysical considerations are concerned. But one is also conscious of the existence in modern social life of big emotional and instinctive movements which overflow the barriers of formal dialectic, and which are groping for some guidance of a less rigid intellectual kind.

Another instance of this method of logical analysis may be cited from Professor Caspar Wistar Hodge's scholarly and exhaustive article on "The Finality of Christianity." Says he:

If we start from the presupposition that man is in his present state and by means of his own native powers capable of attaining perfection and peace and fellowship with God: that he needs no new birth and no Saviour; then all that he needs is instruction and moral incentive. And man can derive this from other sources as well as from Jesus. Having thus started out from the presuppositions of the rationalistic and naturalistic Illumination, we have precluded the possibility of recognizing any "finality" in Christianity; for the very reason that our presuppositions are the opposite to those of Christianity. If, on the other hand, we are convinced that man is fallen and incapable of saving himself or of attaining communion with God, then we are able to see Jesus as he is portrayed in the Gospel as the Saviour from sin. And since fellowship with God is attainable only through this salvation, the finality of Christianity follows from the idea of the Mediatorship of Christ, and is thus seen to belong to the essence of the Christian religion [p. 452].

It is certainly a service, the value of which cannot be questioned, thus to show the "presuppositions" of that type of religious thinking

which is naturalistic; and to show the "convictions" which condition any supernaturalistic type of thought. It is true that the "naturalist" would not define his own position quite in the words quoted. The program of "attainment of perfection and peace and fellowship with God" is rather too quietistic to reveal the actual center of interest in modernism. But apart from this, it clears the atmosphere to state distinctly the different presuppositions of the two ideals. Still, when this difference has been intellectually analyzed, the reader somehow feels that the result is somewhat aloof from the vital movements of religious thinking. There is a failure to correlate these two types of religious thinking to the social progress of our ideals, so as to show what pressing interests of life today lead to the abandonment of the older presuppositions, and to the willingness to embark on voyages of precarious theological exploration instead of sailing by the old charts. Just because of this lack of historical interpretation, the arguments remain formal. The real reasons for the existence of the newer theological thinking do not appear. The *results* and the *presuppositions* of modernist thinking are expounded; but from this volume one would never suspect how a modernist *feels* toward the problems of religion.

Within the limitations of the dialectic which characterizes it, the volume is a worthy and valuable analysis of the present-day situation because it unflinchingly puts before us logical alternatives, which many who have drifted from orthodoxy do not like to face. Perhaps there is no lesson which liberalism more needs than the plain truth that one cannot eat his cake and have it too. That there are undeniable losses in the departure from orthodoxy ought to be recognized. These losses have been clearly indicated in this volume; and the way has been pointed out by which one may with intellectual self-respect retain a "safe" theology. But no mere analytic exposition of contrasting systems can disclose the gains which men feel may be won by risking the loss of the old for the sake of some things which the old does not make possible. With all the strength of its dialectic, and with its faithful portrayal of the tremendous cost of new experiments, the Princeton theology nevertheless gives no hint of the compelling forces driving men today to depart from the "finality" of orthodoxy, and to seek religious satisfaction in the admittedly inadequate and tentative formulations of a groping new theology which lives, not by appeal to authority or by claims of finality, but by virtue of its eagerness to penetrate into the heart of that life today, which, for better or for worse, is determined to exploit to the uttermost the "natural" in the hope of finding there a justification for the dearest ideals of the human heart.

The contributions falling more especially within the New Testament field are "The Emotional Life of Our Lord" by Warfield, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit" by Vos, "The Place of the Resurrection Appearances of Jesus" by Armstrong, and "Jesus and Paul" by Machen. These articles are written from the same doctrinal point of view displayed in the more distinctly theological papers, and they also show thorough familiarity with the literature of the subjects treated.

Professor Warfield finds in his study of the emotional life of Jesus confirmation that he, though incarnate divinity, was yet truly human and subject to all sinless human emotions. After an exhaustive examination and interpretation of the gospel data we are told that Jesus is a "being who reacts as we react to the incitements which arise in daily intercourse with men, and whose reactions bear all the characteristics of the corresponding emotions we are familiar with in our experience." Yet he was not exactly like ourselves; his human nature was more properly "generic" or "universal." "Of him alone of men it may be truly said that nothing that is human was alien to him and that all that is human manifested itself in him in perfect proportion and balance." He was different, too, in that he assumed the flesh not of fallen but of unfallen man. Yet even the flesh which he did assume was under a curse, hence Jesus' emotions are distinctive in the realm of sin-bearing. Thus the emotional side of his life reveals not only the truth of his perfect humanity but the fundamental elements in his atoning work as Savior. "The cup which he drank to its bitter dregs was not his cup but our cup; and he needed to drink it only because he was set upon our salvation."

Professor Vos's interpretation of Paul's doctrine of the Spirit is worthy of careful study. He finds the apostle's conception of the Christian life, particularly in the sphere of the Spirit, to have been but little influenced by thought of the *time* of the parousia. It was not the vivid expectation of the end of the world that determined the character of Christianity, but vice versa. Christianity was primarily the experience of a supernatural and eternal salvation, consequently "the early church lived to such an extent in the thought of the world to come that it could hardly help hoping it to be near in point of time. But this was a mere by-product of a much broader and deeper state of mind." We are not, however, to think of eliminating eschatology from primitive Christianity in order to procure an ideal natural religion for the present. To reject eschatology is also to eliminate supernaturalism and soteriology, which means a rejection of the very essence of religion. Even in Paul's con-

ception of the spirit, where the eschatological element is usually thought to be least in evidence, our author finds it predominant.

For Paul the spirit was regularly associated with the world to come and from the spirit thus conceived in all his supernatural and redemptive potency the Christian life receives throughout its specific character. . . . Not to "transmute" the eschatological into a religion of time, but to raise the religion of time to the plane of eternity—such was the purport of his gospel.

Professor Armstrong's study is rich in references to the literature of the subject and will serve admirably to acquaint a reader with current views upon the problem. In his own interpretation of the data he follows harmonistic rather than critical lines. The accounts of Jesus' appearances both in Galilee and in Jerusalem are accepted as genuine, and are held to be mutually consistent in all essentials. When modern critics doubt the reliability of the gospel record, it is because they proceed upon defective premises which lead them to distrust the early Christian view of Jesus.

But if the early Christian view of Jesus be true in its essential features—and it is attested by all the historical evidence—it may confidently be expected that the totality of the gospel witness in its concrete details will come into its rights, which are the rights—as its witness is true—of Jesus, the Christ, who by his resurrection and appearances became the author of Christian faith at the inception of the church's life, and who is still the ever living source of faith, the Lord of life and glory.

The author of the paper on "Jesus and Paul" believes that Protestantism both in its practical piety and in its theology was simply a rediscovery of Paul. Yet Paul can be followed today only on condition that he accurately reproduces the mind of Christ. If recent interpreters of Paul are right when they say that he was "a second founder of Christianity" who worked out his religion quite independently of Jesus, then Paulinism is not derived from Jesus Christ and must be uprooted from the life of the church. But Professor Machen thinks such an upheaval to be quite unnecessary, for he finds the connection between Jesus and Paul to have been close and vital. In what did this relationship consist? Writers of the "liberal" school have conceded that Jesus and Paul stood widely apart in the matter of theological speculation, especially on the subject of Christology, yet they were together in the realm of practical piety. It was primarily in this field that Paul was an adherent and perpetuator of the religion of Jesus. Our author thinks this explanation wholly inadequate. It is defective, in the first place, in assuming that Jesus was so entirely lacking in a doctrinal conception

of his person; and, secondly, it erroneously abandons the apostle's theology in order to save his religion. Paul knew no such Jesus as modern liberalism has produced (for no such person ever existed), and furthermore the religious experience and the theology of Paul are so indissolubly blended as to defy critical analysis. "Theology apart from religion, or religion apart from theology—either is an empty abstraction." Hence the link binding Paul to Jesus is both theological and practical—though seemingly chiefly theological. The fundamental basis of unity lies in Paul's perpetuation of Jesus' own view as to the supernatural character of his person and work. "If Jesus was not a supernatural person, then not only Paulinism but also the whole of Christianity is founded not upon the lofty teaching of an inspired prophet, but upon a colossal error." And as for our own relation to Jesus, it is essentially the same as Paul's. "Like ourselves he did not know Jesus upon earth—he had no memory of Galilean days. His devotion was directed simply and solely to the risen Savior."

Thus throughout this volume New Testament study is not concerned primarily with Jesus' earthly career and with the natural relations in which his life and the life of the early church were set. Interest revolves chiefly about the supernatural Christ of early dogma and about the New Testament as a witness to the supernatural character of Christianity. Of course there can be no question but that the exponents of early Christianity so viewed religion. Nor were they unique in this respect. That was the age of supernaturalism; no other currency seemed adequate then for estimating the social and religious values of life. But in our time supernaturalism is losing vogue, so one of our great problems is whether modern men must be forced to accept the primitive Christian view of the world in order to be religious in the Christian sense of the term. As against the negative conclusions of the "liberal" school, Princeton scholarship stands for the defense of the affirmative; and it commands respect for its sincerity and thoroughness even though one may dissent from its conclusions.

Whether it happened by accident or otherwise, one cannot help noticing that the articles dealing with Old Testament topics are arguments directed against, or inquiries into, the validity of what are no doubt the three most important "tests" to which the so-called critical school puts the books of the Old Testament. First in importance, though usually last in point of time, comes the historical test. So, for example, a careful textual and linguistic study of a passage shows that it is clearly "messianic." The critical scholar now attempts to date the passage approximately by means of the stage of the messianism

which it reflects and the historical references which it may contain. Professor Davis takes up the passage in Isaiah (9:5, 6) which tells of "The Child Whose Name Is Wonderful," gives an exceedingly learned review of the interpretations of the passage which have been offered hitherto, and concludes that the child referred to was the Messiah who was no other than the second person of the Trinity. The historical objections to this interpretation are regarded as answered by an exegesis of the passage which makes it clear that the child "is mighty God; a father to his people during long, unbounded time; and upholds the kingdom forever. At the same time the messianic king is a man, a descendant of David. A problem is here; yet it cannot be solved by the attempt to tone down the declarations concerning this child until they sound applicable to a human being" (p. 107). The objection that neither the prophet nor his hearers "conceived of the Messiah of later Christian theology as a separate divine personality" is calmly met with the words, "Well, what if they did not? The conception of distinct persons in the Godhead may have been formed in the minds of men later, and be quite true." Fortunately the Old Testament student is able to turn over the question to the theologian at this point, but at the same time it is unlikely that he will allow such discussions to influence his "historical" study of the development of Jewish messianism and eschatology.

Professor Wilson takes up the "linguistic" test. "The Aramaic of Daniel" is the title of his very valuable article on Aramaic philology. There can be no doubt that he has disposed of many if not most of Professor Driver's linguistic arguments for the late date of Daniel. It is unfortunate that this did not lead to the conclusion arrived at by most critical scholars, namely, that linguistic arguments alone cannot decide questions of date. This would have prevented the conclusion that "there never has been a time and place known to history save Babylon in the latter half of the sixth century B.C., in which an Aramaic dialect with just such an admixture of foreign ingredients and in just such proportions could have been brought into existence" (pp. 303 f.). The reviewer fails to see how any such sweeping statement concerning any undated piece of literature can be defended, much less in the case of the Book of Daniel with its complicated historical problems.

Professor Addis, in the article on Isa. 44:24-28, has ample opportunity to test the "metrical" test of the historical school. After discussing the metrical arrangements of this passage hitherto proposed, Professor Addis proposes an ingenious scheme of his own, and calls it the

numerico-climactic arrangement. Even if one should agree that the best solution of the metrical problems connected with the passage had been discovered by Professor Addis, one would hardly be able to follow him when he draws his conclusions from this numerico-climactic arrangement as to the purity of the text.

In the arrangement we have proposed it is not necessary to alter a single consonant of the Hebrew text in order to obtain a beautifully symmetrical poem and one which at every step shows unmistakable evidence of design. We may go a step further and assert that it is practically impossible to alter this poem without marring it and that when the true form of the poem is recognized it becomes at once a most conclusive argument not merely for the integrity of the reference to Cyrus, which we have seen forms the climax of the poem and explains the carefully inwrought double climax, but also for the integrity of the passage as a whole. This proof of the integrity of the poem is of especial importance not only in view of the repeated claims that it is corrupt, but also in view of its testimony to the care with which the sacred record was treasured and preserved by the Jews.

Although one is bound and willing to admit that each of these three articles shows that its author is thoroughly acquainted with the literature of the field, one cannot but add that they seem to have ignored the historical problems connected with the passages discussed: Professor Davis, by insisting upon an exegesis with which one might agree without feeling the necessity of drawing the conclusion that the "child" referred to was more than human and therefore Jesus; Professor Wilson, by attempting to date the book, the language of which he has discussed, on linguistic instead of historical grounds; Professor Addis, by arguing on metrical grounds alone for the purity of the Hebrew text in general and the Isaianic authorship of the passage discussed in particular. The scholars of the critical school are willing to change their historical interpretations of Old Testament passages whenever new historical facts bearing on these passages are forthcoming. Just now many are modifying their opinions as to the period in which the Israelitish-Jewish eschatology developed. Almost every new inscription discovered makes necessary some changes in the "linguistic arguments" of these scholars, and any new light on the meters in which the Hebrew poets composed their messages is welcome. Are the scholars of the "conservative" school willing to change their opinions?

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